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MISSIONARY EDUCATION
OUR CONGREGATIONAL WORK
FOR AMERICA AND THE WORLD

A Day with the Little Folks at Ellis Island

By
MRS. JENNIE F. PRATT

PRIMARY STORY SERIES

For use in connection with Pictures for Primary
Department Charts in the Congregational Mis-
sionary Education Plan for Church Schools

The Congregational Home Missionary Society
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FOREWORD

These sketches will help Primary leaders in telling to their pupils the stories of their little brothers and sisters from other lands. There is more material than will be needed at one time, enough, in fact, for a series of three or four stories. The leader will adapt and use it according to her own judgment.

Mrs. Pratt tells in these little stories of daily life on Ellis Island how children from foreign countries spend a great deal of their time before they can move to that part of the United States where their future homes are to be. This waiting time would be very unhappy if The Congregational Home Missionary Society had not sent your missionary to help these little folks and to teach them many things they need to know in a new country.

Mrs. Pratt meets the children in the Detention Room. She learns their names, finds out where they came from and where they hope to go. She also becomes acquainted with children in the Deportation Room who must go back to the country they came from. She asks them to come to the Kindergarten, and here they learn to play games, to sing, to sew, and to acquire other information about their new homes.

Help is needed in this work, and the children in our Sunday Schools can give it in many ways. They can send toys, scrapbooks, games and story books. Mrs. Pratt is glad to have gifts of thread all colors and numbers; needles (fine and coarse) and darning needles; darning cotton and thimbles for big

girls and little ones. Pieces of cloth for patches are useful, for the boys' suits and the girls' dresses often need mending. The value of good, serviceable, second-hand clothing cannot be told, and the boys and girls at Ellis Island require new shoes as often as the boys and girls you know. Shoes that are not badly worn are among the gifts that Mrs. Pratt is always glad to receive. All gifts of this kind should be addressed to Mrs. Jennie F. Pratt, Missionary Room, Ellis Island, New York.

Mrs. Pratt means to acknowledge all gifts which come to the Island, but because of the pressure of her work she cannot always do so.

Contributions of money are also very acceptable. This money is needed to pay the salary of Mrs. Pratt and for other items of expense. Schools, departments, mission bands, or other similar organizations may take shares in this work in amounts of from \$2.00 to \$25.00 each. If you desire to make a gift of this kind, write to Secretary Frank L. Moore, 287 Fourth Avenue, New York, and make arrangements with him. All such gifts will be counted on the apportionment of your church.

COMING TO AMERICA

When the big ships that bring the people from foreign countries to America dock in New York Harbor, the little Italian, Armenian, Hebrew and Norwegian children, in fact children from almost every land under the sun, are taken to the immigrant station at Ellis Island. Here they must remain until the men who take care of such matters can find out whether they are to stay here and become real Americans or whether they will have to go back to the land they came from. The days are very long and dreary for the fathers and mothers and uncles and aunts. But the children have a wonderful kindergarten, and they so much enjoy the work and play which the teacher directs that often they are sorry when word comes that they are to remain in America and move on to the place where they are to make their future homes.

Every day when boys and girls all over the country are starting to school, the little folks at Ellis Island listen eagerly for the call of the teacher—"School! School!" When they hear it they form in line and march to their classes, children from two to sixteen years of age, who speak all languages under the sun, eager and anxious to know all that can be learned of this wonderful country they are ready to make their own.

ONNIG AND GEORGE FROM ARMENIA

'Here is little Onnig (Johnnie) whom the teacher calls "O'Nick." He is a little four-year-old Armenian boy, and when he looks at the animal pictures on the wall he says, "Mew, mew," for cats speak one language in Armenia and America. Onnig also wants the teacher to play the singing game,

"Did you ever see a lassie go this way and that way?"

Among the children who make paper chains at the kindergarten tables at the end of the room is another little Armenian boy whose father was killed in the massacres during the war. His mother has come here with her children to start life again. George wants to keep his chain instead of having it put on the Christmas Tree, for in all his life he has never had a toy or a book. When he finds that he may keep it, he rushes to the head of the line in order to get down stairs quickly and show his treasure to his mother. When George came to Ellis Island his clothes were ragged, but his mother made a new suit for him from an old one that came out of the old clothes closet. Miss Wheeler, in the nursery, gave him a bath, and when she put on the new suit he knelt down and kissed the teacher's hands in thank-

fulness. The day before Christmas George and his family were allowed to come into the country.

MOSES FROM RUSSIA

The older boys made raffia picture frames for the Christmas Tree, and while they worked the girls had a class in English. Angelina tried hard to say eyes, nose, ears, mouth, etc., and while she recited little Mary showed her what these words mean. Near the piano a group of boys and girls played tag with a swat club. This was a little too American for little Moses, who came from Russia and had never seen a swat club before. When the teacher tagged him and showed him how to run after her he learned very readily. Moses and his brothers and sisters are waiting at Ellis Island for their relatives in this country to come and get them. His father died in America and his mother in Russia during the war.

THREE CHILDREN FROM SUNNY ITALY

In the afternoon class Josephine was crying and the teacher found that she, with her sister, Angelina, and her brother, Salvatore, had been ordered deported. These children came from Italy where their mother died about a year ago. The father lives at Scranton, Pennsylvania,

and had a home waiting for them there. He had written Angelina that she would not have to work so hard to keep the family together, but two weeks before they reached Ellis Island he died. They had to go back to Naples, as there was no one to take care of them here. Angelina says she will keep them together and hopes some day to come back to the United States, the land their father loved.

SEVEN LITTLE ORPHANS

A few weeks ago seven little Hebrew orphans arrived at the Island, Ruth, Sarah, Hannah, Eva, Beatrice, Helen and Jean. They lost their parents in the war and have been adopted by a Rabbi in New York City who formerly knew their father and mother. How their eyes did shine when they were told they would have a father and mother here. Their landing at the Barge Office was not all pleasure, for Eva's doll had its head broken off, but they all hugged the scrapbooks that were given them as they went on shore.

CHRISTMAS AT ELLIS ISLAND

On December 23d, there was a Christmas Tree, intended especially for the children in the schoolroom. Over 250 children and some of the mothers enjoyed it. Everyone received

a toy, an orange, cake and chocolate. One of the Sunday Schools from New York City played Santa Claus. The children all shook hands with Santa and received their gifts from him. Near the tree stood Francesco Felice. Francesco is sixteen years old and came from Naples with his two sisters and their children. He was very lonely that afternoon, for he had been separated from his sisters for a month and a half and did not know what had become of them. While the gifts were being given he looked up and found one of his sisters standing beside him. He thought this his best Christmas present. The teacher had given him an Italian Bible, and he says there are many good stories in it.

A little Russian girl thanked the teacher for gifts for herself and little sister. "You know," she says, "I am going to America tomorrow, for my brother Moses has been discharged from the hospital. We have been here just three months today, and I long to see my father. Little Hannah was only a baby when she came to America."

The American flag was given to little Hannah, and she was held up by the piano, while the children sang "America." The other children bade Hannah and Sarah and Moses good-bye and said they also hoped soon to be real Americans.